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ARE WE CIVILIZED?

Our Vaunted Superiority to Savages Is an Idle Boast—Savage and Civilized Man Compared.

The United States Is a Republic Only in Name—We are an Oligarchy. The Aristocracy of Wealth.

A Remedy Proposed—Return to Primitive Democracy—The Initiative Referendum Considered.

We boast of our high civilization. But in view of the events of the last year can we boast without a blush? Labor troubles on every hand, and strikes and lockouts are of frequent occurrence. To quell these disturbances state militia called out, and also federal troops, to quell the disturbances which in many cases resulted in destruction of life and property. Capital employing the Pinkerton mercenaries to shoot down labor, followed by trials for treason and murder.

What is our boasted civilization but gilt-edged savagery? The civilized man is more inventive, and possesses the faculty of combination, used, however, to oppress the masses. The cruelty may be more refined, but not less real, in the civilized as in the savage condition.

Savages rob and plunder. Civilized man achieves the same end by pools, trusts and combinations of capital. Savages fight with spears and battle axes, civilized man with galling guns and repeating rifles. A very large share of the inventive genius of the last century has been employed in producing more and still more powerful engines of destruction. Europe is one vast military encampment, and America vies with the old world monarchies in the equipment of its naval armament.

The world seems to be preparing for its Armageddon. Gog and Magog are marshaling its forces. When will the era of "Peace on earth and good will to man" find its consummation? Are we indeed "Marching toward a diviner civilization?" Will millennial day ever dawn on our troubled world?

These certainly are questions that are not easy to answer. The pessimist says "no." The optimist says "yes." Others may answer: "Who can tell?" It has been generally conceded by philosophers and statesmen that the problem of ages will be wrought out on the American continent.

But the rapidly with which we are approaching European conditions does not favor this roseate view of things. To be sure, one form of oppression chattel slavery, has disappeared only to be replaced by another, industrial slavery, more wide-spread and more acute in its suffering than its ancestor and immediate progenitor. One expired in the smoke of battle, but the other took its terrible form from the same blood-soaked field. It needs no "fugitive slave law" for its fugitives cannot escape. Its charter reads: "Perpetual indebtedness." "Ownership of labor by the money power, less responsibility of providing for the indigent and disabled laborer." This is the economic status of America today. "Angels, and ministers of grace, defend us!"

The United States is only a republic in name. We are an oligarchy. The moneyed aristocracy is dominant every where. The constitution interdicts a titled aristocracy. What are the Astors, the Vanderbilts, the Goulds, Huntingtons and other wealthy families and financial magnates but powerful aristocracies less the title? "What is there in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

But to come down to events of recent date. It is supposed that in a republic a majority rule. But they do not. The president is frequently elected as in the late election, by the electoral college but not having received the majority of the popular vote.

Again legislative bodies are the sole judges of the qualification of their own membership and there is no appeal from its ultimate findings. The courts may be invoked but they cannot control. The will of the people expressed at the polls is defied and there is no redress. Popular elections have degenerated into a meaningless and expensive farce. The contests in the legislatures of several states in the

west, and the election in the south all bear out this statement. Bribery, corruption, fraud and jobbery are dominant.

With all our boasted liberties, the American republic is retrograding and has been for a quarter of a century. The fruitage is for the man or the party with the longest money pole. The prizes fall at the feet of those who have the longest and the strongest pull.

How shall these conditions be met and overcome? By going back to democracy. By the return of power to where it rightfully belongs—the people. By popular election of president and vice president; by the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people. Apply this fundamental rule to all officers of the courts from the highest to the lowest, to all state and national appointive offices wherever practicable. Carry this "ark of the covenant" into the temple of the Dragon of patronage.

It is time for the sternest iconoclasm.

Strike, for your alms and your fires; Strike, for the green graves of your sires, God and your native land."

Finally inaugurate a campaign of education. Demand the incorporation into state and federal constitutions the most approved form of the "initiative and referendum." Let the demand for legislation, especially involving expenditure of the public funds, originate with the people, and its ultimate adoption submitted to them for their approval.

The Swiss republic has for a long time had this system in actual and successful operation. This plan would mollify much of partisan bitterness. It would lessen jobbery in legislation. It is only just that those who must bear the burdens of taxation should regulate the legal outlay.

KICK OUT THE BARNACLES.

A Leavenworth Editor Doing a Little Roasting on His Account.

D. R. Anthony, editor of the Leavenworth Times and a leading republican politician of Kansas, is registered at the Windsor hotel. The visitor is a brother of Susan B. Anthony and was lieutenant colonel of the famous Seventh regiment of Kansas, known as Jennison's Jayhawkers.

"What are the prospects of the republican party?" was asked the well known politician as he sat in one of the Windsor's soft-cushioned chairs last evening.

"If the party don't reorganize and kick out the old barnacles it will go to the dogs," was the emphatic response. "New men must be brought to the front. Instead of devoting their time to abusing the people's party, the republican leaders must prove by acts that they will do all the party has promised. Our real foe is the democratic party and there we must center our fire. There is really no antagonism between the better element of the republican party and the conservative element of the people's party. I believe in handling the money question so as to give enough to the silver advocates to satisfy them. The money power of New York nominated both Harrison and Cleveland, and it made no difference to the millionaires which man won."—Saturday's Denver News.

Mr. Gould's huge fortune accumulated in the name of the people and perpetuated in bulk for the benefit of his descendants is a monument of the folly of the laws which gave the rich man the chief benefits of government and the poor man its chief burdens. The income and inheritance tax is a great equalizer.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The proposal to restrict immigration is met by the foreign steamship lines with a threat to withdraw the special rates to the world's fair. This, they say, would cause immense loss to the fair. Congress will be very easily impressed if such cheap bluffs as this has any influence. Such a scheme as that suggested would injure the steamship lines worse than any other interest. They are not so short-sighted or independent as to do anything of the kind. But let congress pass the restriction bill anyhow. The absence of cholera from this country will be worth infinitely more to us than the presence of European visitors to the fair, much as this last is desired—by the fair managers, and Chicago.—Wichita Eagle.

THE COMING FIGHT.

A Forceful Presentation of Pending Issues and Reforms—The People to be Enlightened.

Endorsed by the Reform Press of Kansas at Their Meeting in Topeka, December 20.

A Paper Read by J. P. Esterly of Marysville, Before the Reform Press at Topeka.

It must be a fight for liberty. We must clearly comprehend by patient effort the great fact embodied in the well known statement that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Are we fully conscious of the fact that true political and social liberty was never in such perilous straights before? I am not a pessimist. Were I not an optimist I should declare that liberty has been destroyed or driven from our land. It must be a fight, a battle for light and truth—the revelation of the truth concerning our own condition and the tendency of the forces of civilization.

I fully believe that we, that is, the American republic, shall survive, but not by resting supinely at ease and saying "all is well," but because there are many good and true men who see clearly that liberty must be fought for and that her foes are at hand and powerful, and these men are at work. This I hope is the reason we are here. There are yet in our land, yea in our own grand state, many people who are not aware of the fact that plutocracy has craftily and with criminal intent taken possession of the slowly organized party machinery which was built up in purer times for the convenience of the people in governing themselves, and that this machinery, while retaining the original names, no longer obeys the hand of the masses of either party for whose good it was created, "but has come to be a malign engine that serves the privileged few at the expense of the despoiled many." We must fight for their liberation from the thralldom of partisan prejudice by using every argument and every means to show them their slavery.

We must fight not only for the enlargement of the ranks of reformers, but also for the preservation of the principles of true reform within our ranks. As the reform party increases in numbers and power, the tendency will be toward party spoils and partisan conquest and the neglect of fundamental principles. We shall need to guard well against such tendencies. Let us survey briefly some of the forces against us in this contest.

The plutocratic press sustained by the corporations, constitutes the most active force against us. This is sustained by the advantage of having the field and by its skillful use of the prejudices of its readers, thus keeping their eyes closed to the truth. The hearts of the people are intent upon right, and we must gain access to them by persistently though patiently and kindly bombarding the fortress now held by base means. To paralyze the efforts of the secular plutocratic press we must strive for accuracy and truthfulness in the presentation of argument, and freedom from personal invective.

To neutralize the vicious influences of the religious press to win them to our cause we must present a higher code of morals than that "business is business," and show the people that the business of men as distinguished from that of mere money getters, is to live and help live. To say "live and let live," is beneath the moral standard of true malice. I do not mean to say, nor to be understood as intimating, that the whole influence of the religious press is vicious, but that there is vicious influence in it; for while it may denounce usury, it has no moral standard for determining what usury is. In New York and several other states, it is usury to charge more than six per cent interest. In other states the limit is seven, eight, ten, twelve, or any rate agreed upon, and the churches and the religious press are content to let this rest upon legal grounds, doing nothing whatever to learn and teach the moral elements involved. It is one of the elements of the fight before us to stand for the

for the moral quality called equity and against the immoral and unjust extortion practiced under high legal interest either by statute or contract or both.

Centuries ago this was a question of morals. It was allowable to charge a stranger interest or hire for the use of money, but not a neighbor or brother. A stranger was an alien, an enemy. Now all men are brethren, neighbors and under the same law morally that was then prescribed for those not strangers.

This coming fight must be made with the weapons of peace—skillful presentation of truth in the interests of humanity, not in a combative spirit as against any man or set of men, but only as combating error, and that by pointing out the more excellent way. When reviled, revile not again, but turn on the modern electric searchlight of fuller orb truth till our enemies slink away in darkness or confess the error of their way and join our ranks.

Perhaps you want me to indicate some particular contests to be undertaken at once. Well, we must besiege the citadel of public indifference in regard to certain reforms in legislation and create a demand for certain work to be done by the next legislature. We ought to be practically and actually a unit in insisting that our legislature shall follow out the plan of brushing aside some useless and expensive time-honored customs, as did our valiant leaders in deciding that the inauguration of our governor shall be a plain business affair rather than a scene of revelry for the display of butterfly of fashion. Let us fight the useless and ruinous formalism and do-nothingness of legislative bodies, and demand that from this time on the legislature shall be a body of workers who shall transact business for the people, rather than use the people's time and money to do business for the corporations.

Let us demand a mortgage relief law; the Australian ballot law, or a better system; a law making anyone who purchases a vote in any way or even spends enough for a cigar for the purpose of electioneering, ineligible for office thereby; an equitable school tax law that will prevent the present inequalities of this burden; the introduction of the initiative and referendum and proportional representation; a thorough revision of our insurance laws; a law that will fully enfranchise the better half of our citizens; railroad laws that will relieve the people from extortion; a law making the railway commissioners elective by the people; laws providing highways; a law providing that July 4, election day, Thanksgiving and Christmas shall be holidays; and a law fixing the election of township officers upon the same date as that of municipal elections.

But I need not specify further. We ought to agree before this session closes upon a plan of action for the coming year. Let us always fight for truth as God gives us light to see it, for the interests of humanity, and for a broader, deeper and more universal application of the principles of equity and justice in all business and political action.

Reports from Washington indicate that Mr. Crisp is almost as proud of the snub he received from the Reform Club as the Englishman was of the kick he got from the real lord.—New York Press.

There are more free silver voters in Texas than any other two states in the union. The Texas populist vote last month was nearly 100,000 for Mugent and Weaver, and the Texas Hogg democratic state ticket was elected upon the people's party platform. Texas is the greatest free silver state of all. Alabama and its 85,000 free silver voters comes next.—Denver News.

The discussions in the monetary conference have developed that there is not a nation on earth that has money enough to do business with. There is not a nation of Europe that has any spare silver to dump on the United States. Wealth there is in abundance, but it is not distributed, and cannot be so long as the circulating medium is strangled. Strangle the constrictors and let there be all the money that business calls for.—Nonconformist.

Did You Ever ~~~

STOP TO CONSIDER THAT THERE ARE SO MANY STORES THAT ADVERTISE BARGAINS THAT IT IS

A Question

?

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